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Letter dated 24 February 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the policy paper prepared for the symposium entitled "Enhancing women's share in peace and security", held in Vienna on 3 and 4 November 2014 (see annex).

I would be grateful if you could have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Martin **Sajdik**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 24 February 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Enhancing women's share in peace and security: good practices, gaps and challenges in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda — emerging trends and priorities in twenty-first-century security (3-4 November 2014, Vienna)

Policy paper: women and peace and security agenda — progress and remaining challenges after 20 years of implementation

The year 2015 is important for the women and peace and security agenda. It also marks the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. These documents recognized for the first time the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women and, in particular, the important role of women as active agents of change in the promotion and maintenance of peace and security.

Over the past two decades, essential progress has been made in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and resolution 1325 (2000) on various levels. Member States, the United Nations system, international, regional and subregional organizations and civil society groups have invested in the development of policies, action plans, guidelines, programmes and training with a view to ensuring women's active participation, the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in peacekeeping and the prevention and resolution of conflict.

In spite of these efforts, however, numerous challenges remain. Grave abuses and acts of violence against women, including sexual violence and rape, continue to be a common occurrence in conflict and post-conflict settings all around the world, and current cycles of violence in different parts of the world stand out for their disproportionate impact on women and girls. The call made in resolution 1325 (2000) for increased representation of women at all decision-making levels and the inclusion of women in the prevention, management and resolution of conflict has not become the norm, but remains marginal. In addition, media coverage of conflicts is still dominated by a stereotypical portrayal of women and men that creates an overall image of women as helpless victims of rape, sexual violence and displacement while neglecting to document and present the various ways that women act as combatants, supporters of conflict, mediators, peacebuilders, decision makers and agents of change.

Symposium entitled "Enhancing women's share in peace and security"

Against this background, and as a contribution to the campaign of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), Austria hosted a symposium entitled "Enhancing women's share in peace and security" in Vienna on 3 and 4 November 2014. The symposium brought together international experts from politics, government, military, academia, the media and civil society to discuss major achievements, remaining challenges and emerging priorities in the

implementation of the women and peace and security agenda in the twenty-first century and provide recommendations for the way forward.

Following a high-level public opening, experts engaged in closed interactive discussions on progress, challenges and necessary future action focusing on the following four areas: (a) mainstreaming a gender perspective into conflict prevention and crisis management; (b) gender-sensitive conflict assessment and analysis; (c) women as active agents of change in peace talks; and (d) the role of the media in implementing resolution 1325 (2000). During the closing session, key findings and recommendations on how to achieve better results in the above-mentioned areas were presented. The recommendations aimed to ensure that women's potential to make crucial contributions to the resolution, management and prevention of conflict would become more visible, recognized and effectively used.

Recommendations for the way forward

Participants in the symposium stressed that the women and peace and security agenda represented a strategic and holistic approach to foreign and security policy that recognized that it was indispensable to involve both men and women, on an equal footing, in matters of peace and security in order to make conflict-resolution efforts more effective and increase the chances for achieving sustainable peace. Humanity as a whole, not only women, would benefit from women's increased involvement and participation.

Participants also called for a comprehensive understanding of the gender dimensions of armed conflict, as well as of peace processes, and for the integration of gender issues into all aspects of foreign and security policy. They stressed that gender inclusivity was fundamental to deconfliction and post-conflict State-building. They also highlighted the importance of differentiating between "gender" and "women" and of engaging more men and boys as champions of gender equality.

Participants acknowledged the lead that Africa had taken in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and welcomed the appointment by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission of a Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security.

With a view to ensuring that women's needs and rights are recognized, their voices heard and their contributions to the establishment of long-lasting peace and security more effective, participants in the conference made the following recommendations:

Recommendations addressed to national Governments and international, regional and subregional organizations

- National Governments that have not yet done so should develop national action plans on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) by 2017 as a collaborative effort with civil society, including women's rights movements and organizations.
- National Governments should introduce and implement quotas for women's participation in relevant positions in foreign and security policy.
- National Governments should include, in national action plans on resolution 1325 (2000), strategies for working with and reaching out to the media and

contribute to raising the awareness of journalists so as to improve reporting on the resolution and its core topics of prevention, protection and participation, as well as on the overall women and peace and security agenda.

- National Governments should incorporate women and peace and security issues in their periodic reports to relevant human rights treaty bodies, in particular to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in view of the Committee's general recommendation No. 30, and should implement the Committee's recommendations in this regard.

- National Governments should support the proposals of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals, in particular the proposed goals on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and on peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice for all and effective and capable institutions, and should ensure coherence between the women and peace and security agenda and the post-2015 development framework.

- National Governments and international, regional and subregional organizations should prioritize the development of localization strategies for resolution 1325 (2000), to ensure that high-level political commitment is translated into meaningful implementation at the very local level.

- National Governments and international, regional and subregional organizations should work together with civil society to develop regional action plans on resolution 1325 (2000), in particular where it is necessary to address current conflict or post-conflict situations.

- National Governments and international, regional and subregional organizations should facilitate women's participation in peace talks, including by providing access to flexible funding mechanisms, in particular concerning logistical aspects such as access to visas and travel funds and by providing follow-up support to safeguard women's security.

- National Governments and international, regional and subregional organizations should boost women's capacities to participate in and contribute to formal and informal peace talks and dialogue processes by investing in developing the skills of women leaders, including women from marginalized populations, for example through the establishment of rapid, intensive training units.

- National Governments and international, regional and subregional organizations should promote gender-responsive budgeting frameworks and policies in the broader peace, security, governance and development strategies they support, to define priorities for maximizing the utility of existing resources and to ensure the integration of resolution 1325 (2000) into national and local planning processes.

- National Governments and international, regional and subregional organizations should promote participatory approaches to identify women and peace and security priorities, fund and implement those priorities and monitor progress at the local and national levels. Best practices in multi-stakeholder and partnership-based approaches to implementation, monitoring and

accountability activities related to resolution 1325 (2000) should be documented and scaling-up options outlined.

- National Governments and international, regional and subregional organizations should hold perpetrators of grave violations against women accountable, with no impunity whatsoever, and make clear that under no circumstances are the human rights of women negotiable.
- National Governments and international, regional and subregional organizations should develop a comprehensive understanding of the gender dimensions of armed conflicts and peace processes through context-specific gender and power analyses (social mapping) to be integrated into all conflict management, peacebuilding and programming efforts from the start-up phase.
- National Governments and international, regional and subregional organizations should use and report on gender-sensitive early warning indicators for conflict prevention developed by the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and civil society organizations, and should increasingly incorporate women in early warning and crisis management mechanisms supported by the latest information and communications technologies.
- National Governments and international, regional and subregional organizations should generate and earmark funding for activities aimed at improving the security situation of women in conflict zones.
- The United Nations should appoint a high-level personality as goodwill ambassador for women and peace and security issues.
- The United Nations should ensure that senior management throughout the United Nations system has been alerted to, is knowledgeable about and is aware of the importance of the effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).
- The United Nations should form a pool of experts composed of experts from civil society, Governments and the United Nations to offer assistance to States in the development of national action plans and should ensure that United Nations resident coordinators will provide the poorest countries with the support needed for their preparation, including technical assistance.
- The United Nations Development Programme should publish, in 2015, an update to the *Arab Human Development Report 2005* that focuses on women.
- The United Nations, international, regional and subregional organizations, including the European Union, should appoint more women as special representatives and envoys for conflict-affected countries.
- The United Nations, international, regional and subregional organizations should ensure that the terms of reference and mandates of all mediators and peacebuilding actors are gender sensitive and incorporate a gender perspective, thus ensuring that there is, from their part, accountability for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.
- The European Union and other regional and subregional organizations that have not yet done so should appoint a special envoy on women and peace and security, following the good practice of the African Union.

- International, regional and subregional organizations should coordinate and national Governments should participate in periodic formal peer reviews at the regional level to monitor Member States' progress and performance in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). This could be modelled on the peer review mechanism on development cooperation of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Recommendations addressed to civil society and the media

- Civil society should undertake a global review on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) complementing the global study on the implementation of that resolution requested by the Secretary-General.
- The media should raise the awareness of and alert journalists and media workers to gender issues in order to further gender-sensitive reporting.
- The media should avoid stereotyping the roles of women and men, provide coverage of the diverse roles played by women in conflict and in building, securing and maintaining peace and report in depth on the impact of gender issues, including women's and men's representation, on the success of conflict-resolution and peace talks.
- The media and civil society should increase efforts to monitor the media in order to ensure that women, as well as gender-related issues, including sexual atrocities against women and men, girls and boys, are adequately represented and addressed in the media.
- Civil society should intensify its advocacy at the national, regional and international levels for accountability and the effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

Recommendations addressed to all actors

- All actors should identify, nominate and lobby for more female candidates to be appointed and selected for senior positions in the United Nations, in particular in the election of the next Secretary-General, in 2016.
- All actors should actively engage men and boys to support the women and peace and security agenda, including in the context of women and peace and security projects and programmes, and embrace the "He for she" campaign of UN-Women.
- All actors should engage religious leaders on the issue of the human rights of women and the women and peace and security agenda.
- All actors should identify resilience actors and peace activists in all stages of the conflict cycle and develop alternatives for non-violent conflict resolution.
- All actors should integrate the media in policies, campaigns and communications strategies on resolution 1325 (2000).
- All actors should customize information on resolution 1325 (2000) to local and regional contexts so that men and women can engage locally in successes and gaps in implementation.

- All actors should make the content of resolution 1325 (2000) available in local languages and use wording that non-experts can understand, and should conduct public outreach and educational activities, in particular through interactive programmes, by using modern communications technologies and forms of media, including film and social media, as well as by engaging the young.

- All actors should establish a dedicated multi-stakeholder financing mechanism to support the women and peace and security agenda and accelerate the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).